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~~H. O. Grauman~~  
~~Mr. H. H. H. H.~~  
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12/2/62 letter to J. W. H. H.  
H. H. H.

# RURAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT



**R**evitalizing



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

making full  
use of our  
resources for  
all citizens

## RURAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT

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*We must show the  
world what a  
free economy can do  
...to put unused  
capacity to work,  
spur new  
productivity and  
foster higher  
economic growth.  
President Kennedy.*

FROM FARM TO MAIN STREET, many areas of rural America are on the move, snapping out of the economic doldrums caused by rapid changes in agriculture.

In these areas, economic decline is being reversed by new payrolls and other growth. More young people are finding jobs at home, rather than moving to the city. Cropland is being converted to income-making outdoor recreation, to grass, to trees, and to fish and wildlife production.

In short, the forces of change that pushed these communities to the brink of disaster are being re-shaped to work *for* people—not *against* them.

Many other communities are beginning to organize, to survey their resources, to draft plans for the economic development of their areas, and to put these plans into action.

Behind this upswing in rural America is a new program—Rural Areas Development. RAD represents a new approach to solving the problems of rural areas; it places the emphasis on people and their communities, rather than on commodities.

First, local people organize and indicate their willingness to invest their energies and initiative in overcoming the special problems that inhibit economic growth in their area. Then the Department of Agriculture coordinates its financial and technical assistance programs with those of other Federal, State, and local bodies to aid the local people in developing and improving their resource base.



## Rural America Today

While the RAD program has improved the economic situation in many communities, these communities represent only a handful of the areas now at work on economic development. More than half the Nation's poverty exists on the farms and in small towns and cities of under 2,500 population that make up rural America. Nearly a third of the people of the United States live in our rural areas. They include:

- 14.3 million farm people. Among them are the farm families who operate the world's most efficient farms—the 1.5 million (40 percent of all farms) that produce 86 percent of the Nation's farm commodities. Among them also are the people who work the other 2.2 million farms that produce only 13 percent of

our crops and livestock—people who lack the land, credit, skills, or other resources needed for efficient farming. Many of them work part-time in nonfarm jobs and in that way earn satisfactory incomes.

- 40 million nonfarm people. Many of them depend on businesses or services directly related to farming. Some have urban jobs. Some are unemployed or work only part-time. Some are retired.

Another 25 million people live in the small cities that are an integral part of rural America although by census definition they are urban. (The census counts towns of 2,500 or more as urban.)

Rural America is a cross-section of the United States, but in many respects it is a cross-section lacking opportunities many Americans take for granted.

A lot has been said about city slums, but almost half of the Nation's poverty is found in rural areas.

Of the country's 8 million families with average yearly incomes of less than \$2,500, about 3½ million live in rural areas.

About 800 counties are in the serious "low income rural areas." About 31 million people live in the open country and small towns of those counties. For two decades or more, people have been leaving these areas. Community and private facilities have run down or even been abandoned. Some broad rural areas—both farm and nonfarm—have almost "gone out of business."

There are 22 million rural youth under 20 years of age; more than 4 million are in the families with extremely low incomes. And more than 1 million children are born each year in rural America.

Even the farmers who operate efficient family farms have lagged behind the rest of the country in income. Caught in the middle of the cost-price squeeze, many of them have survived only because they lived in part from capital investment. Efficiency, capital, labor, and management skills just haven't paid off as well in agriculture as they have in the nonfarm economy.

Further, erosion and misuse have lowered yields and increased production costs on millions of acres. The Department's Conservation Needs Inventory shows 62 percent of the Nation's cropland, three-fourths of the private pasture and rangeland, and more than half the private forest and woodland need to be improved and protected by conservation work.





## RAD—A Dynamic Force in Rural Community Effort

The rural areas development effort is a new dynamic force helping rural people to better their lot. It is the Department of Agriculture's way of aiding people who are working to help themselves.

The ultimate objective is better living for rural people, both farm and nonfarm. The rural areas development effort, by the Department, provides services to enable local action groups to bring new opportunities to the people of the open country and to their trading centers. Its goals are:

- Prosperous, family farms.
- New jobs in trades, professions, services, and industry.
- Improved management, use and conservation of natural resources.
- Expanded public services and facilities such as roads, hospitals, schools, power supply, and water systems.
- Readjustment of rural land use patterns, making more land available for the increasing needs of outdoor recreation and open spaces, while decreasing cropland acres.
- Guidance and training of rural youth and adults.
- In some areas, a complete rural renewal program, similar to urban renewal programs now bringing new life, new hope, and new opportunities to parts of some cities. Many Federal, State, and local agencies are helping.



# Services of USDA Are Mobilized for RAD

Department of Agriculture resources are committed to the nationwide rural areas development effort, to support State and area organizations in their programs to solve rural problems on an area-wide basis.

**Nationally.**—The Department's Office of Rural Areas Development coordinates all USDA assistance to advance the RAD program. Technical help, research, credit, long-range planning for soil and water use, conservation cost-sharing, education, and other services of the Department are available for the nationwide RAD effort.

The Department's Rural Areas Development Board brings together representatives of 14 agencies\* to assure a meshing of Department services. The President appointed an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development and Conservation, an action further coordinating the Department's program for rural areas development. A National Advisory Committee on RAD works closely with the Department. This committee includes representatives of every rural interest in the Nation. The Department also enlists the help of the Departments of Commerce, Labor, and Health, Education, and Welfare; of the Small Business Administration, Housing and Home Finance Administration, the Farm Credit Administration, and others.

The Department works with national organizations—farm, labor, education, business, church, finance and credit, and other similar groups.

**In States and Areas.**—In the field, specialists of the Department of Agriculture and State agencies are members of technical action panels (TAP), co-chaired by State and local representatives of Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service, and Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Here the services of the Depart-

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\*USDA agencies represented on the Rural Areas Development Board are: Agricultural Marketing Service, Agricultural Research Service, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Cooperative State Experiment Station Service, Economic Research Service, Farmer Cooperative Service, Farmers Home Administration, Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, Federal Extension Service, Forest Service, Office of Rural Areas Development, Rural Electrification Administration, Soil Conservation Service, and Statistical Reporting Service. The Farm Credit Administration is represented on the Board as an associate member.



ment are packaged for an area-by-area, community-by-community approach to the specific problems of the people and the use of their own resources. Members of the technical panels work with local voluntary groups. They help them plan projects. They help to find outside capital. They act, as requested, as coordinators between local people, who seek aid, and the Government agencies that may have the facilities to help.

## ARA Helps RAD in Designated Areas



The Area Redevelopment Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce provides important help for rural areas development in designated areas.

Over 800 rural counties have been designated as eligible for ARA help, for which USDA has major responsibilities in the designated rural areas.

Among USDA's assignments under the Area Redevelopment Act are: Recommending rural areas to receive assistance; aid in preparing overall economic development plans; the review of rural area plans for development; and, most important, helping local leaders put together plans and projects that will make full use of the new credit and technical assistance programs provided by ARA.

ARA services include industrial and commercial loans in designated rural areas, as well as loans and grants for such community facilities as water and sewer systems, clinics, and tourist projects. ARA also provides funds for training for new jobs—as factory workers, as electricians, as tractor drivers, as tractor maintenance workers, and for other jobs.

Mountain City, Tenn., is an example of the meshing of ARA and RAD. The Johnson County area, in which Mountain City is located, is an ARA-designated locality.

USDA personnel reviewed the area's overall economic development program and approved its recommendation for sewer and water facilities. ARA approved a \$106,300 loan and grant for these public facilities, which indirectly resulted in 300 new permanent jobs in the area.



# Heart of Development— Local People

The heart of any area's development rests with local people. They review their resources, their needs, and their objectives. They start the action of economic development by organizing themselves into areawide development committees. State and county Extension Service workers help them to organize.

These areawide committees include voluntary representatives of the entire community—businessmen, farm leaders, labor leaders, doctors, clergy, attorneys, civic club leaders, youth leaders, press, radio, and television staff members, representatives of rural credit unions, and many other persons directly concerned with local area development.

These area development committees contribute time and know-how to making rural areas development and ARA work for them. They compile useful facts about their own area. Thus, they are able to evaluate their needs and opportunities in terms of:

- People, including the number and skills of workers, the employment in manufacturing, wholesale and retail trades; public and professional services, employment in farming, underemployment, and education.
- Physical resources, such as land, water, timber, grassland, minerals, buildings, roads, transportation, credit, power, and community services including water supply and sewer systems.

From their own studies, along with educational and organizational assistance from the Cooperative Extension Service, and the help of USDA technical action panels, the committees are able to put together an overall economic development program for their area. With such a plan, the local committee can proceed effectively with development projects. The plan also can be used to seek outside help.



## RAD Gets Results

In Webster County, W. Va., local people wanted to keep their industries, to bring in new industries, and to provide opportunities for their youth. They organized a RAD committee. They made plans, and then put their plans into action. The result: The county has three new industries employing 310 people; two major recreational areas catering to tourism.

Through the efforts of the local RAD committee, Jonesport, Maine, people created a wood-working industry providing direct employment for seven persons and indirect benefits to scores of others. The new industry has potential for developing more jobs.

Harrison County, Ind., long plagued by unemployment and underemployment, stopped the trend, when local people organized to attack their problems. As a result, the area has a new factory providing 35 jobs, with prospects for more.

Jasper County, Miss., citizens can look forward to 150 new jobs stemming from community efforts to improve public facilities.

The efforts of Sanders County, Mont., people were coupled with help from the area's electric cooperative and a loan from Small Business Administration, to create 50 fulltime jobs, and extra income from 120 tree farmers.

A lumber yard in Warroad, Minn., was rebuilt through the efforts of local people to provide jobs for 225 persons, and part-time work for 172 farmers.



# RAD Pyramids Benefits

Rural Areas Development projects have a way of pyramiding benefits.

The Department of Agriculture helped the farm and townspeople of Mountain Run Watershed, Culpeper, Va., to plan and carry out a small watershed project. This project served as a catalyst to set off a chain reaction that will benefit not only the people within the watershed, but also those far beyond it.

Main purpose of the project was to protect the people of Mountain Run Watershed, including those living in Culpeper, from floods. But water supply for Culpeper was developed along with flood prevention.

Three new industries—a steel fabricating plant, a woman's sportswear factory, and a laundry—have gone to the community because of the dependable water supply and the protection from floods. New homes, new shopping centers, and a new hospital have also been built.

Roads have been protected and beautified by roadband erosion control work.

Three new lakes provide recreational space for boating and fishing. And there also is a 4-acre picnic area, the first park in the community.

Similar pyramiding benefits also come from the Department's loans for rural electrification, rural telephones, and rural housing.

## Congress Provides New Self-Help Tools

Important new tools to help rural people help themselves were provided by the Congress in 1962: The Food and Agriculture Act of 1962, the Senior Citizens Housing Act, the Accelerated Public Works Act, and the Manpower Development and Training Program.

With these new tools and the programs already operated by the Department of Agriculture and other Departments or independent agencies, individuals and their local agencies can create new economic opportunities through conservation, development, and multiple use of land, water, and related resources; strengthen family farms, establish and improve marketing facilities for farm products, establish new industry, provide job training or retraining, improve housing, and increase the income of rural farm and nonfarm people.

***Food and Agriculture Act of 1962.***—Under programs provided by this Act, the Department is aiding local people with:

Resource Conservation and Development Projects.  
Rural Renewal Projects.

Long-term changes of land use from crops to recreation, grass, trees, and fish and wildlife production.

Development of public recreation and future municipal and industrial water supply in small watershed projects.

Credit for developing and operating income-producing outdoor recreation and other improved uses of land.

“In every case, I have made local initiative and leadership the first criterion for Department help under the new programs,” Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman said when he announced them.

**Senior Citizen Housing.**—The Department’s loan program now includes loans to build housing for rural people 62 years of age or older. They are eligible for loans to buy existing housing, or to build or improve their homes. A new insured loan program enables commercial concerns to build rental housing for the elderly. Loans to nonprofit organizations and cooperatives also are authorized to provide rental housing for the older people.

**Accelerated Public Works.**—Jobs are being created by this new program in rural areas designated for help under the Area Redevelopment Act. These public works are being carried out in National and State Forests, Small Watershed Projects, and Soil Conservation Districts. Some construction work is being done at agricultural experiment stations. Accelerated Public Works Program is coordinated by the Department of Commerce’s Area Redevelopment Administration.

**Manpower Development and Training.**—Members of farm families with a net annual income of less than \$1,200, as well as unemployed farm and nonfarm workers, are eligible, under this Department of Labor program, for training in skills needed in the labor market area where they live, or in other sections of the Nation.

### Where To Get Help On RAD

See your county extension agent or the local representative of the Farmers Home Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, or the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. For additional information, write Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250. If you are in an ARA-designated area, write to Area Redevelopment Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C., 20260.

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